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You want to sort of leave it all on the table when you walk away at the end of a season. Otherwise, what are you saving it for?

—Shonda Rhimes

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CHAPTER RECAP

A lot of pilots get picked up and made, but very few go on to become hit series that last for several seasons. Here are some of Shonda's tips on what makes for an engaging series and keeps people watching a show:

- ▶ Don't veer from the course. Your second episode should be like your pilot all over again.
- ▶ Similarly, you've made a promise to the audience about your story in the pilot. Stick to it, and only move beyond it once you've earned your audience's trust.
- ▶ Get creative and wild with your ideas. This may be your only chance to use them. Don't assume you have several seasons in the future to use them.
- ▶ Don't add elements to your show unless they have a pay off.
- ▶ Ground your plot lines around what is natural for your character to do next.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Revisit the episode list you created for your story bible and re-write them after the lessons you've learned in this chapter. Is episode two re-emphasizing what happened in episode one? Are you adding plot elements that don't have a clear pay off? Are your storylines grounded in character?

SUBCHAPTERS

- ▶ Episode 2 Is the Pilot, Again
- ▶ Fulfill the Promise of Your Show
- ▶ Use Every Idea That You Have
- ▶ Everything in Your Show Must Have a Point
- ▶ Be Versatile and Evolve Your Show
- ▶ Write Story Around Character, Not Vice-Versa

NOTES
